



Buzzwords ...

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..... the newsletter for National Beekeepers' Association members

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Buzzwords No 21 July 1990



NBA PRESIDENT SAYS GOODBYE

After four years as NBA president I have decided not to offer myself for re-election at this year's conference. So I'd like to take this final opportunity to make a few observations, and to express my appreciation to the many people who have provided me with assistance and encouragement.

I find myself leaving the job with mixed feelings - ranging from relief at the thought of less of the constant pressure that's part of the job, through some satisfaction at achievements made, to a degree of disappointment in not fully achieving all of the goals we've set.

To be realistic, some of the issues presently before us are so complex and subject to major outside influences that we may never see a final solution. They may remain constantly changing for many years, and will continue to occupy a great deal of time and attention from those in the hot seat.

One example of this is the question of a marketing policy for our industry. We will always need to keep this under review, even when a firm decision or direction is taken. Sheer market forces mean that an occasional change of tack will have to be made along the way, but as long as the boat continues to head in the same general direction we can reach a positive destination.

But if we continue to navigate by a series of individual readings, with each paddling in opposite or completely independent directions, then progress will be very slow or very probably around in circles.

We now have an NBA marketing committee. This is made up of representatives of various sectors in the industry who are working towards establishing a New Zealand honey industry marketing strategy. But if we don't have a definite sense of direction from the majority of beekeepers, backed

by a strong commitment both spiritually and financially, then this committee will be much less able to achieve what's needed in the future.

Another concern to me is the unresolved issue of maintaining disease inspection services for the whole industry, and the question of contracting and funding MAF. This has occupied a huge amount of administration time over the past four or five years, and though we seem to be closer to a solution there's a lot still to be done in negotiating legislation and contracts.

It's disturbing to see in this year's remits to conference a call from some quarters of the NBA to reduce the influence of MAF on our industry. I thought the government had already achieved this to great detrimental effect by slashing the number of apicultural advisers to critically low levels, particularly in the South Island where they've become an extinct species!

Perhaps this is the ultimate solution sought by those who advocate further reduction of already sparse and severely-stretched MAF services to our industry. I suspect that much of the motivation behind this thinking is to hasten the introduction of drug-feeding as a disease management option, by diminishing our present eradication and control capability to unworkable levels.



People pushing this point of view often quote cost reduction and enhanced profitability. Overseas experience doesn't bear this out. Drug residues cause honey marketing difficulties, and the masking of other serious diseases can become a greater problem than the one being treated in the first place.

I trust that we'll hear clearly at 1990 conference from the many beekeepers who have benefited from the positive "influence" of MAF apicultural advice and other services in the past. I trust also that the past undertaking to establish a workable and improved disease inspection service for our industry will continue to receive the support of the majority of beekeepers and the appropriate attention of executive.

On the positive side, I believe we have made a number of worthwhile achievements, despite operating during a period of great economic difficulty and radical changes in our society. By continuing to work under a sound industry plan, we've developed our communications, education and research capacities, and received support from other organisations through a more active profile at executive level.

Finally, time for acknowledgements. My sincere appreciation to the other five executive members, who have provided

considerable support and co-operation to me as president, sometimes having to set aside their personal opinions in favour of the majority or most favourable decision. Thanks also to the assistance given to executive through the secretarial and managerial services of the Pork Industry Board, and to the MAF apiculture unit for their professional input and expertise willingly provided when requested.

Lastly, particular thanks to the many beekeepers I have met around the country, and who have offered hospitality and advice - including the critics who are an essential part of our association's democratic process. In resigning as president I believe I'll miss this aspect of the job most of all and I wish my successor the same good will and fellowship I have been fortunate to receive these past four years.

Allen McCaw NBA president (in the meantime).

GETTING BETTER QUEENS

Something that's important for all of us is getting better quality queen bees. One beekeeper in Blenheim, Reg Clarke, has been doing serious experiments on this subject for some years now.

What has this research shown? The results of the 1989-90 season's work have just been published, and contain a wealth of detail about queen quality.

They show that queens of very high physiological quality can be produced by the methods described.

These methods are suitable for large scale queen production. Other queen producers must judge for themselves what effect this would have on the cost of production.

Reg Clarke's work is concerned solely with physiological quality. This is additional to the genetic aspects of queen quality, not a substitute. It is as little use to produce a good physical specimen from poor genetic stock, as it is to waste the potential of excellent stock by producing daughter queens with small reproductive organs or sperm amounts, which cannot translate their genetic potential into product.

New Zealand soils are in many areas seriously deficient in important mineral nutrients. We cannot determine what effects if any this has on hive productivity, but we know that bees aren't exempt from the laws that govern cellular chemistry in other species.

Reg Clarke will be at conference and is interested in talking to people about this issue. His latest research paper (16pp) is available from 81 Lakings Road, Blenheim, for \$4 including GST and postage. Reg's article in the latest *New Zealand Beekeeper* is also worth re-reading.

LING HEATHER BIOCONTROL

Beekeepers think it's gold. Land conservators are worried that it's invading important areas of tussock grassland. The plant is ling heather.

We've got ling heather because some homesick Brits thought they'd like to go grouse shooting on the central

volcanic plateau in the North Island. They burnt off tussock and planted ling heather, and introduced the bird.

Grouse didn't make it, but the ling heather stayed on. Even by 1944 the plant was only in scattered locations in Tongariro National Park, and not thought to be spreading.

Now there is very little tussock grassland left. Heather may also be threatening other areas of native grassland outside the national park, such as in the Ruahines.

DSIR's Plant Protection Division has been asked to evaluate the feasibility of introducing the heather beetle to control ling heather. The director (Dr John Longworth) is receiving submissions now. This isn't a formal environmental impact assessment - that comes later - but if you want to comment, write to Dr Longworth at DSIR, Private Bag, Auckland.

HONEY RECIPES WANTED

An urgent request has come in for honey recipes from a Mrs Manning-Joyce of Manning-Joyce Associates Ltd. She's been exporting honey to Japan for 18 months and finding it in high demand.

She's after either a honey recipe book, or honey recipes which she could include in a book yet to be written. The recipes would be used in promoting honey sales in Japan and also in home-hosting and entertaining Japanese visitors in New Zealand. Contact Mrs Manning-Joyce at PO Box 55092, Mission Bay, Auckland. Phone (09) 528-4582 or fax (09) 528-3788.

BRANCH NEWS

Winter in the **Bay of Plenty** is going to be livened up this year with an NBA midwinter Christmas. For the paltry sum of \$5 per head the branch is providing a poultry that's not paltry (turkey) plus a huge ham and Christmas pudding. You're to bring a dish of vegetables, salad or even dessert, plus grog plus a partner.

Come along with one wrapped Christmas gift per person of no more than \$4 in value and marked for male or female recipient. There's a prize for the most novel gift, so let your imagination run riot and leave your good taste at home.

This grand social event will be at the Debreceeny household in Moffat Road, Bethlehem (opposite Decor Garden Centre), on Saturday 14 July starting at 6.30 pm. RSVP by 7 July to Dave Debreceeny (62536) or Dave Warr (66641).

Advance warning - Bay of Plenty's diseasesathon will be on Saturday 29 September.

There was a disappointing turnout at the Bay of Plenty branch's last meeting. That's a pity, because the speaker - Basil Graeme of the Forest and Bird Protection Society - had some pretty important things to say for beekeepers.

Native bush provides some of the beekeeper's most important nectar and pollen resources, for spring buildup and honey flows.

Forest and Bird are doing a lot to protect those resources from being replaced by pine trees. In the Bay of Plenty alone, several important reserves of bush have been put into DoC hands after Forest and Bird lobbying.

Other branches - here's some ideas for action.

- * Hear someone from F & B or the Maruia Society. They're working for you, so find out what you can do to help.
- * Watch local papers for local issues.
- * Write to Ministers and MPs about the issues.
- * Make submissions as a branch when these are called for.
- * Support control of weeds which can throttle native bush. Ginger plant and moth vine are very serious because they are shade tolerant.

And a Happy Rarotonga to all of you who are going to conference!

Marlborough branch's next meeting is on that important subject of backs. Be at the Ballinger Centre in Budge Street at 7.30 pm on Tuesday 17 July. Learn about physiotherapy, backs, and if all that fails - ACC. It could be the most important meeting you attend!

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

From the truth is stranger than fiction department....Wasps are protected by law in Germany!

Anton ten Houten of MAF Ruakura reports that on a recent visit there he met a scientist who is working on protecting wasps. These insects, including the two species oh so familiar to us, are thought to be beneficial for forests. Problem is, their numbers are falling for some unknown reason (acid rain, insecticide use or soil pollution?).

VISITOR LOOKS FOR WORK

If you're after an employee this spring, here's a visitor from Scotland looking for work. But the best thing of all is he'll work for nothing (surely he's not a true Scot?).

Graeme Clark is an engineer but runs 100 hives with his father as a sideline. He'll be here from mid September to mid November, and either wants to work for nothing or just visit. He's keen to expand his knowledge and learn more about beekeeping.

Contact this individual at: G Clark, Marley Brick Ltd, Errol, Perthshire PH2 7RB, United Kingdom.

SUBSIDY COSTS

Farm subsidies and import barriers cost the world's richest nations more than \$NZ124 billion last year in lost income. The OECD says farm support policies waste resources by

overstimulating production and raising land and food prices.

In the US politicians, fed up with the payment of billions of dollars in farmer support have launched a programme to cut subsidies. The promoters, both Republican and Democrat, say the current excesses are examples of a farm policy that has gone dreadfully awry.

From another quarter it's reported that the USA will be forced to give up agricultural subsidies in the same way as New Zealand, according to the chairwoman of the US International Trade Commission. She says that the US and Europe are getting tired of countering each other with larger and larger subsidies.

The news is similar in New Zealand too. Here the government has issued a clear warning to farmers that the day of massive handouts for disaster relief is drawing to a close. Agriculture Minister Jim Sutton says the infusion of state aid after Cyclone Bola and the recent East Coast drought are not a pattern for the future, and from now on farmers will have to stand on their own feet or fall.

From Rural News

BUZZWORDS IN THE BEEHIVE

It's nice to know that some people in power are reading our newsletter! We commented in the last *Buzzwords* that the Resource Management Bill's select committee hearings aren't starting until October. Someone on the committee has pointed out that not only have they already started, but they have finished. What has been delayed are the seminars on the implications of the bill.

It's good to hear that passage of the bill is proceeding smoothly. In terms of impact on the beekeeping industry, however, the Commodities Levy Bill is more important. We have been anxiously awaiting that one for some time, as it is the only way we will have to levy ALL beekeepers to fund a disease inspection and control programme.

Nick Wallingford, NBA executive

PASSENGER INFORMATION PROGRAMME

International travel is becoming much more common with 500,000 New Zealanders departing on short trips each year. In addition, there were 700,000 foreign visitors to New Zealand in 1988.

The number of international travellers passing through our ports and airports is growing at a rate of 10-15% each year. Compounding each year, that produces a phenomenal increase.

This international movement is a hazard to our agriculture security. Apart from prohibiting this movement, there is no way of eliminating the hazard. Therefore, the focus is on keeping the risk of inadvertent or illegal introduction of exotic diseases or pests to a minimum.

Items which endanger our plant and animal health status are intercepted almost daily. Some people try to bring restricted items in illegally, but the vast majority of interceptions result from ignorance of agriculture security regulations. People do not know that certain items are restricted because of the risk they pose to New Zealand agriculture.

To overcome the problem of travellers not knowing the risks or the rules, MAF's agriculture security service is developing an awareness programme composed of:

- * An information package which includes the answers to questions most often asked by travellers and the relevant regulations.
- * A programme to keep travel advisers (both here and overseas) informed and supplied with adequate stocks of the information package.
- * A process by which the information will be kept up-to-date over the next five years.

From Sentinel, the magazine of MAF's agriculture security service.

SUGAR PRICES

Just to confound the pundits who predicted a rise in sugar prices... the price on the world market has dropped from around US 15c/lb to a little under 13.5c.

Also on the sugar front, Nelson & Robertson advise that they cannot get any from PNG this year (ending 31 December 1990). Seems that Papua New Guinea has had lower production and is giving priority to domestic orders.

THAT'S INCREDIBLE

A new York man has been charged with petty larceny after stealing cow manure from his uncle's farm. Donald Magoon was charged with stealing \$340 worth of the stuff that most kiwi cockies couldn't give away!

BUZZWORDS IS ...

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